

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 12-17 are pending in this application. Claims 1-9 and 12-17 are allowed. By this Amendment, claims 10-11 and 18-26 are canceled.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments:

(a) place the application in condition for allowance by canceling all non-allowed claims; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments merely cancel the non-allowed claims; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not presented earlier because they are made in response to arguments raised in the Final Rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication at page 4 of the Office Action that claims 1-9 and 12-17 are allowable over the prior art of record.

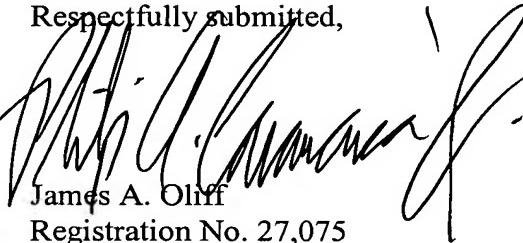
Claims 10, 11, 25 and 26 remain withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, these claims are canceled.

Claims 18-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,368,754 to Imai in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,344,748 to Feely. By this Amendment, claims 18-24 are canceled, thus rendering the rejection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Prompt allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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